

“MAKING JESUS KNOWN AND LOVED”

*Our Marist Mission:
To make Jesus Christ known and loved,
in the way of Mary,
through the education and care of young people,
especially the most neglected.*

1. **Gathering & welcome** *(Some options to consider when gathering)*

- Ambient music playing as people gather
- Call to prayer: fading of music ... sounding of a bell ... diming of lights
- Acknowledgement of our first peoples
- Opening song while the Word as it is processed into the sacred space

2. **Introduction**

We gather today before these two bicentenary paintings to acknowledge the passing of 200 years since Marcellin Champagnat welcomed Jean-Baptiste Audras and Jean-Marie Granjon into a small house at La Valla on 2 January 1817. This decision by St Marcellin began the first community of Marist Brothers. In this, the bicentenary year of the founding of this first community of Brothers, we Marists come together as a vital faith community to embrace *God’s mission with Marian joy, hope, and audacity (We Marists).*

*On 16 February 2017, four paintings each telling a significant part of our shared Marist story, were blessed and commissioned at the Marist community of Santa Teresa in the Northern Territory. These paintings tell four different Marist stories: the story of Fourviere; the story of the dying boy, the story of the first Brothers’ community at Lavalla, and the story of the May Miracle. And yet, viewed all together, these paintings tell us one important story - the story of the mission of Marists in the way of St Marcellin Champagnat: “to make Jesus known and loved”. Throughout 2017, these four paintings will journey in pairs around Australia, spending some time among our Marist communities and ministries. Today, our community has received *[identify the pair of paintings received]*. We have received these paintings from *[name community paintings have most recently visited - communities visited is located on the itinerary]*. To date, these paintings have journeyed through the following Marist communities in Australia *[you may like to include the names of some of these communities here as a way of providing a context for the journey for members of your community]*.*

3. **Sign of the cross**

4. **The story of the paintings**

a. *What do you see when you look at these paintings? [ambient music; time for quiet reflection; time for sharing (either in small groupings or in the whole group)]*

b. Commentary options *(Select according to your painting pair)*

FOURVIERE PLEDGE (PAIR 1)

*The first of these paintings captures the dream of 12 newly ordained priests 200 hundred years ago in Lyon, France. Their dream is known as the promise or **pledge of Fourviere**. When you look at this painting you will notice that the central image is that of Mary holding the child Jesus. This image is significant, because it was before Mary that St Marcellin and these young priests made a promise to form a new*

society, to be known as the Society of Mary. It's simple aim and mission was to make Jesus known and loved in the way of Mary.

Artist's comment: "the gold ochre/yellow behind the statue signifies the divine shaft of light of heavens being ready to embrace Mary and the Child. The numerous pairs of hands in a mostly praying position and mostly towards Mary, stand for "to Mary" and those away from her, for the "from Mary to the world", spreading the good news ... Throughout the painting, an abundance of dots and marks are sprinkled generously like confetti, in jubilation and celebration of this important event. The mostly prayerful hands suggest not a cult-like adoration of Mary but measured prayer and pledge: For Mary (in the name of Mary) and from Mary to the world.

DYING BOY [PAIR 1]

This is a story you may have already heard. It is the story of St Marcellin visiting a young boy who was dying knowing nothing of God. You will notice in the painting that the artist has chosen much darker colours to emphasise this crisis for this young boy and the local church. While the painting shows the boy has already died and is in the care of the angels, St Marcellin is depicted contemplating how he can respond to this crisis to make Jesus known and loved. This mission is now urgent!

Artist's comment: My rendition shows Marcellin without the halo as he is not a saint yet in the forefront of the painting. His bust takes almost half of the entire painting and his prominent face shows emotions, but above all, the resolve. The death of the boy is the instrumental in Marcellin's decision to focus his life and energies on evangelisation and attending the poor and neglected ... The head of the boy is above the saint to the left, reduced in size; his death is already part of the past we cannot change, details matter less now than decisions stemming from the event being the catalyst for such a resolve of Marcellin's.

LA VALLA [PAIR 2]

This painting is of the interior of the house at La Valla that St Marcellin acquired to accommodate the first two Marist Brothers. In this painting the artist has included a section of the table that St Marcellin built for this infant community as well as some other rustic features of this first house. In the middle of the table is a loaf of bread symbolising the sacredness of the community gathered around the table. The Marist mission to make Jesus known and loved had begun in earnest.

Artist's comment: I started with La Valla, the interior of the house where Marcellin lived and had his meetings with the first Brothers, and even the table he had made with his own hands ... In the depiction of the table with a loaf of bread, I used the old iconographic way of rendering objects in a number of different angles in one and the same picture, giving it all a touch of surrealism. The table is lifted up towards the viewer, showing bread in a perspective different from the rest of the painting.

MAY MIRACLE [PAIR 2]

The last painting represents the difficult situation that the first community of Marist Brothers had in establishing the school at the Rocks, in Sydney in 1872. Put simply, the students were undisciplined and out of control! It wasn't until the Brother in charge invited the students to build an altar to Mary and to pray to her daily during the month of May, that things turned around. You will notice that the chaotic bottom of the painting quickly gives way to the more ordered church stained glass windows. The bright

golden intrusion of colour from the top left hand corner suggests that this change of attitude and behaviour was a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Marist mission to make Jesus known and loved had come to birth in this young colony in Australia.

Artist's comment: In reflecting this 'miracle', my painting starts with forms and shapes alluding to the chaos, rebellion, defiance, disorder, youthful shenanigans. From there the structure of the church, a symbol of discipline and respect, grows into an ordered grid shaped as a church with many segments as stained-glass windows, culminating in a gothic top to be more church-like, yet, without being overly illustrative about that ... The giant shaft of Divine light with the Holy Spirit (a traditional way this is depicted in icons) descends on a diagonal from the left and enters the area of the church with its segments/windows. This ray of light is full of most vibrant energy; its effervescence and exuberance is dispersed throughout the whole painting.

5. **Gospel reading:** Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus, for him to touch them. The disciples scolded them, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. In truth I tell you, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he embraced them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing. The gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

6. **Response to the Gospel** (Choose one or more of the following options)

OPTION 1: Reflection on the reading

This could be given by one member of the assembled group or shared by the group.

OPTION 2: Psalm 127

Leader: Psalm 127 was close to Marcellin's heart, and reflected the steadfast confidence and boundless faith he placed in God's providential care. With this same spirit of openness and trust, we turn to God with hope.

Response: *As people of the dawn we look beyond the horizon with hope.*

Reader #1: If the LORD does not build a house
In vain do its builders toil.
If the LORD does not guard a city
In vain does its guard keep watch.

All: ***As people of the dawn we look beyond the horizon with hope.***

Reader #2: In vain you get up earlier,
And put off going to bed,
Sweating to make a living,
Since it is he who provides for his beloved as they sleep.

All: ***As people of the dawn we look beyond the horizon with hope.***

Reader #3: Children are a birthright from the LORD,
They are a reward from him.
Like arrows in a warrior's hand
Are the children you father when young.

All: *As people of the dawn we look beyond the horizon with hope.*

OPTION #3: The Magnificat

Leader: *The Magnificat is Mary's faith-filled song of praise to God which is recorded in Luke's gospel (Luke 1:46-55) during her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Together, with the joy and confidence of Mary at the visitation, let us pray her song of praise:*

*My soul glorifies the Lord,
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour,
He looks on His servant in her lowliness;
Henceforth all ages will call me blessed.*

*The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy His name!
His mercy is from age to age,
On those who fear Him.*

*He puts forth His arm in strength
And scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
And raises the lowly.*

*He fills the starving with good things,
Sends the rich away empty.*

*He protects Israel, His servant,
Remembering His mercy,
The mercy promised to our fathers,
To Abraham and his sons forever.*

7. **Prayers of Petition** [**Note:** A custom set of prayers would need to be composed for students]

1. The story of our spirituality is indeed a simple one. It is a story of women and men who find within a thirst that only God can quench. Having drunk deeply, they find themselves filled with Jesus' own desire – to give flesh to God's Good News. (WFR 43). *For a passion to make Jesus known and loved, we pray.*

Response: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

2. Mary inspired Marcellin's style of being on mission. In so doing, she shows us that contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of our spirituality. Mary's way lays the foundation of all our actions: listening, patient waiting, nurturing interiority and responsiveness to God's will. (WFR 131). *For this a commitment to follow Jesus in Mary's way, we pray.*

Response: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

3. Driven by the Spirit, we are helping a new ecclesial model to be born, one based on the equal dignity of all Christian vocations and in the image of the Church as people of God in Communion (GAST 144). *For the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat, that it may grow to witness new ways of living the gospel in our Marist tradition that looks to the future with hope and daring, we pray.*

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

4. Marcellin's response to the needs of his time was also formed by the *Project* shared by the first Marists who dreamed of a renewed way of being Church, to which they pledged themselves at **Fourviere**. With and the other 'founding Marists', Marcellin shared the conviction that Mary was calling them together to respond to the needs of post-Revolutionary France. (WFR 10) *For the vision and commitment of our founding Marists to respond to the needs of our church of today, we pray.*

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

5. In Marcellin's encounter with the **dying young man**, we see how disturbed Marcellin was to meet a boy facing the end of his life without knowing the love God had for him. This event aroused him to immediately put into action his foundational insight, *We must have Brothers!* (WFR 8/9) *For all young people on the margins of our society, that we may help them to come to know and love Jesus.*

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

6. Marcellin believed that in constructing a house he is developing a true community. Through living the rhythm of community life, both at **La Valla** and then at the Hermitage, Marcellin animates and nourishes the community life by his example, giving himself to manual work and to community prayer. (WFR 100) *For inspiration in animating anew the Marist charism in our day so that we may be attentive and responsive to God's mission we pray.*

Response: Lord hear our prayer.

8. **Our Father OR Hail Mary ...**

9. **Closing prayer and/or song**

*Mary, dawn of the new times
we thank you because you have always done everything among us
and you continue doing it down to today.*

*We place ourselves confidently in your hands
and abandon ourselves to your tenderness.
We also entrust to you each of the persons
who, like us, feel privileged to bear your name.*

*We renew this day our consecration to you
as well as our firm intention to contribute to building a Church*

which reflects your face.

*You, source of our renewal, accompany our fidelity,
as you accompanied those who preceded us.
On this day of the Marist bicentenary,
we feel your presence next to us
and for that we give you thanks.*

Adapted from the prayer by Br Emili Turú FMS in He Gave Us The Name Mary.

Salve Regina (Camino version by Br Michael Herry)

*Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae;
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevae,
ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eja ergo advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

10. **Closing Invocations**

Mary Our Good Mother. *Pray for us.*
St Marcellin Champagnat. *Pray for us.*
St Mary of the Cross. *Pray for us.*
And let us always remember - *To pray for one another.*